JOB SHEET

Brush Management

Oklahoma Conservation Practice Job Sheet **314 01**

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) **April, 2003**

Mesquite Suppression

What is brush suppression?
Brush suppression is the use of herbicides at rates that do not result in significant kills of the mesquite but do significantly reduce competition, allowing restoration of desired grassland plants.

How it helps the land
Suppression of mesquite can reduce the tree canopy and allow the recovery of native plants. This increases the grass cover, increases forage for livestock, increases nesting cover for ground-nesting birds and reduces rainfall runoff.

Where the practice applies
This practice can be used anywhere the intended use is grazing lands.

Where to get help
Your local Natural Resources Conservation Service or Conservation District office can assist you in developing a brush management and grazing management plan that will meet your objectives.

Applying the practice
Optimum spraying dates are in the spring when the mesquites' leaves are fully leafed out but before susceptible agricultural crops have emerged.

Spraying can be done on the entire pasture or by "wide swathing" whereby the applicator sprays one pass, skips a pass, then sprays the next pass.

Other considerations
A grazing management plan is needed to insure establishment and maintenance of the desired plant community. This may require deferment for the growing season following treatment. Field observations of plant composition considered with long-term objectives are a part of the grazing management plan.

Many species of birds, such as bobwhite quail, depend upon forbs for brood habitat. The insects that are critical for the brood are more abundant in broadleaf forbs. These seed-

producing forbs also are a food source for birds. Moreover, other species depend upon forbs such as white-tailed deer. Wildlife Habitat Appraisal Guides are available to assist with planning wildlife objectives.

Spraying every year will result in a reduction of forbs, legumes and some desirable woody species for wildlife such as plums and hackberry. It is anticipated that many of the perennial forbs will recover, but will take 3 - 4 years post-spraying. Therefore, spraying in consecutive years will increase grasses and decrease forbs and legumes. Spraying every 2 - 4 years will maintain some of the forbs while still suppressing the mesquite.

Maintaining the practice

Once the desired plant community is established, a management program consisting of proper stocking rates will be needed to maintain plant health and vigor. Spray the area often enough to maintain about a 10% canopy of mesquite, which should be every 3 - 4 years. Prescribed burning may also be used to maintain the desired plant community as well as to burn down standing dead trunks.

Site Specific Planning Recommendations

_____ Client _____ Date_____ Acres

Field No.	Chemical	Formulation	Timing	Swath Width	Remarks

Additional specifications or notes

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_____ **Conservationist** _____ **Date**